

BEFORE THE WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION

BURLINGTON NORTHERN SANTA FE RAILROAD COMPANY)	DOCKET NO. TR-020022
)	
Petitioner,)	ORDER GRANTING PETITION TO UPGRADE WARNING DEVICES AT BUTTERFIELD ROAD
)	
v.)	
)	
YAKIMA COUNTY)	D.O.T. 098468E
)	
Respondent)	W.U.T.C. 2AL 2.50
.....)	

BACKGROUND

- 1 On January 4, 2002, the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Company (BNSF) filed a petition with the Commission, seeking authority to upgrade warning devices at a highway-rail grade crossing. The crossing is located at the intersection of the petitioner's tracks and Butterfield Road, in the NE ¼ of the SE ¼ of Section 17, Township 13 N, Range 19 E., W.M., in Yakima County, Washington. Funding for the upgrades is pursuant to the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act in cooperation with the Washington State Department of Transportation.

- 2 Respondent has consented to an entry of an order by the Commission without further notice or hearing.

DISCUSSION

- 3 Butterfield Road, in the vicinity of the crossing, is classified as a collector-arterial road. The roadway consists of one lane for each direction of traffic and a vehicle speed limit of 35 mph. Because Butterfield Road runs north-south and the BNSF tracks run northwest-southeast, their intersection occurs at an acute angle. In addition to the grade crossing, Butterfield Road intersects with Hartford Road immediately west of the crossing. Hartford Road runs parallel to the railroad tracks, with 42 feet between the two. Due to the close proximity of Hartford/Butterfield intersection to the grade crossing, left-turns onto Butterfield from Hartford Road are considered by the petitioner to be additional roadway approaches to the crossing. Average daily traffic through the crossing is estimated at 1,992 vehicles, including 96 trucks and 5 school bus trips. Average daily traffic is expected to increase to 2,789 vehicles by 2020.

- 4 BNSF maintains one branch-line track through the crossing. Daily train traffic includes 2 freight trains per day, operating at a maximum timetable speed of 10 MPH.

5 Warning devices at the crossing include standard Crossbuck signs. Petitioner seeks to upgrade the warning devices through the installation of shoulder-mounted flashing light signals with gates. In addition to signals facing the north and south Butterfield Road approaches to the crossing, the plans filed with the petition indicate that a pair of flashing light signals will be mounted on the signal mast in the southeast quadrant of the crossing to warn motorists turning left into the crossing from Hartford Road. The upgrades are being proposed in the interest of improving safety for highway users.

6 Commission Staff investigated the petition and recommended that it be granted, subject to specified conditions.

7 This matter was brought before the Commission at its regularly scheduled open meeting on February 15, 2002. The Commissioners have reviewed the petition and have been advised in the matter. They believe that granting the petition, subject to the conditions set forth below, is in the public interest, and direct the Secretary to issue the Order.

ORDER

8 THE COMMISSION GRANTS the petition of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Company to upgrade warning devices at a highway-rail grade crossing, designated as WUTC 2AL 2.50 and located at the intersection of Butterfield Road and the petitioner's tracks in Yakima County, Washington, subject to the following conditions:

- (1) The upgrades must conform to the plans filed in this proceeding.
- (2) Traffic control devices must comply will applicable standards specified in the U.S. Department of Transportation *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*.
- (3) Traffic control devices and instrument housing must be installed in such a manner as to provide required clearances for both rail and vehicular traffic.
- (4) Upon completion of the installations authorized herein, petitioner must notify the Commission. Acceptance of the installations is subject to a compliance inspection by Commission Staff, verifying that the changes are in full compliance with law, regulation, and the conditions specified herein.

DATED at Olympia, Washington and effective this 15th of February, 2002.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

CAROLE J. WASHBURN, Secretary